

hear, his father, William Lee, remained a fierce American patriot and volunteered to serve in the U.S. Army Air Corps in World War II.

He never lost his belief in America. His father, William Lee, inspired his son, Bill, just as Bill Lann Lee now inspires his own children and countless others across the land.

This is what he told us:

My father is my hero, but I confess that I found it difficult for many years to appreciate his unflinching patriotism in the face of daily indignities. In my youth, I did not understand how he could remain so deeply grateful to a country where he and my mother faced so much intolerance. But I began to appreciate that the vision he had of being an American was a vision so compelling that he could set aside the momentary ugliness. He knew that the basic American tenet of equality of opportunity is the bedrock of our society.

I know that Bill Lann Lee has remained true to all that his father taught him and I hope that the "momentary ugliness" of people opposing his nomination based on an ideological litmus test, and of people distorting his achievements and beliefs, and of some succumbing to narrow partisanship, will not be his reward for a career of good works. Such treatment drives good people from public service and distorts the role of the Senate.

Bill Lee's skills, his experience, the compelling personal journey that he and his family have traveled, his commitment to full opportunity for all Americans—these qualities appeal to the best in us. Let us affirm the best in us. Let us confirm—or at least allow the Senate to vote on the confirmation—of this good man. We need Bill Lee's proven problem-solving abilities in these difficult times.

If the Senate is allowed to decide, I believe Bill Lann Lee will be confirmed and will move this country forward to a time when discrimination will subside and affirmative action is no longer needed; a time when each child—girl or boy, black or white, rich or poor, urban or rural, regardless of national or ethnic origin and regardless of sexual orientation or disability—shall have a fair and equal opportunity to live the American dream.

I have often referred to the Senate as acting at its best when it serves as the conscience of the Nation. In my 25 years I have seen it do that. Again I speak to the conscience of this body. I call on the Judiciary Committee of the Senate to bring this nomination to the floor. Let the Senate have an up-or-down vote on Bill Lann Lee without

obstruction, without further delays, so the Senate may vote.

If we do, I am convinced that a majority of this body will confirm a fine person to lead the Civil Rights Division into the next century. Racial discrimination and harmful discrimination in all its forms remains one of the most vexing, unsolved problems in all of our society. In a country so blessed as ours, so rich, so powerful, so wonderful, we still have this cancer of discrimination that shows up randomly throughout our society. Let's not perpetuate it here in the Senate. Let the Senate move forward from the ceremony commemorating the Congressional Gold Medal for Rosa Parks by doing what is right, by voting on the nomination of Bill Lann Lee.

I yield the floor.

ADJOURNMENT UNTIL MONDAY,
JUNE 21, 1999

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate stands in adjournment until 12 noon, Monday, June 21, 1999.

Thereupon, the Senate, at 12:54 p.m., adjourned until Monday, June 21, 1999, at 12 noon.